

able to pay our troops, buy supplies and give them shelter.

Specifically, the facts show that without passing this bill, our military is slated to run out of money for Iraq operations in January.

What does this mean? It means the curtailment of training and equipment maintenance activities in the United States to better prepare our troops.

It means that contracts will be severely delayed or canceled to provide body armor, armored vehicles, jammers, and radios needed in the field to keep these guys not only protecting our security but protecting their own lives.

But the politicians in Washington, many of whom have never worn the uniform and have done a heck of a job to avoid service, now stand proud and mighty saying they are working for these troops safety.

And they will again use our troops as a prop to make their so-called case.

But the facts are the troops are the last things on the mind of the White House and this shameful Republican Congress.

This Republican Congress and this Bush White House has continually underfunded our troops and used them as a political prop.

Remember "Mission Accomplished" anyone?!

If Congress cared about our military so, outside of props and campaign commercials, why is this bill 3 months behind schedule?

Why is this bill being used to provide a multi-billion gift to the nation's biggest gas companies, by allowing them to drill in Alaska?

The Republican Leadership attached the can't pass ANWR provision to this must pass bill in the ultimate example of politics gone wrong.

By not giving us the ability to vote on ANWR alone, this does not mean that we approve of this misguided policy.

I thought they were making enough profits off Americans at the pump now—but Congress and the White House think they can make more money for the ExxonMobils of the world—this time off the backs and lives of our troops fighting overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This is the most shameful act I have seen in the most corrupt Congress in American history.

This year America has seen the Republican Majority Leader of the House of Representatives TOM DELAY be indicted on money laundering charges.

America has seen the Republican Majority Leader of the Senate BILL FRIST under investigation for criminal charges—charges like those that sent Martha Stewart to jail.

America has seen a senior Republican Congressman from California, Randy Cunningham, take over \$2 million in bribes through war-profiteering using information he gathered on the House Intelligence Committee.

He sold this confidential information to the highest bidder, but this Congress won't even seize his 6-figure, taxpayer-financed annual pension.

America has seen the U.S. Congress put up for sale to the highest bidder by people like Jack Abramoff and Mike Scanlon.

But tonight, we are seeing something far worse and far more depraved, the complete politicization of our troops, serving in war time, to provide a boon to the oil and gas industry.

There is more shame to go around Congress now than indictments, and that is saying something today in Washington. The Republicans are holding funding for our military, funding for body armor, funding for security for military personnel hostage to keep the world safe for the profits of big energy.

And for that you pay \$2.35 a gallon for gas!

Regardless of what one thinks of the war, we need to protect our sons and daughters fighting over there.

But again, this bill and this Administration falls short, using politics over policy; using political consultants over generals to fight a war.

Who loses? Our troops lose. Their families lose. America loses.

But this bill again reflects the warped priorities of the Bush Administration.

While I am angry about this process and this bill, I will reluctantly vote for it as our men and women in military need these funds immediately—even with these shameful additions.

I won't play the Republicans' game and hold our troops hostage, but I hope the Republicans in Congress and the White House who use our military as a political sound bite or tool to pass their own unrelated items recognize they represent the worst of America.

The blood of American men and women is on their hands for their politics of delay, diversion and division.

I yield back what shame is left in this corrupt institution.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2863, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AP- PROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, America's servicemen and servicewomen are the bravest, most valiant and skillful soldiers on earth and because of them, our military is the best in history. As the daughter and brother of war veterans, I am particularly supportive of our Nation's soldiers. The men and women serving America deserve the full support of our Nation. This is why it is particularly distasteful and dangerous when elected officials in Washington play politics with legislation that affects our troops serving right now in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

It is tremendously disappointing that the leadership from the other side of the aisle has decided to play politics with this bill. They have taken a straightforward bill to fund our military, knowing that it is destined to pass, and hung politically controversial and unacceptable legislation to it. They have given us a withering Christmas tree.

This is politics at its distasteful worst, and it must be rejected. I am voting "no" on this bill because of the bad governance it represents and because of the bad policy attached at the last minute.

Opening part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling creates environmental harm in pursuit of a band-aid for our Nation's energy problems. Instead of putting adequate resources into developing alternative energy sources, which could solve our long-term

problems, some in the Congress and the administration find it easier to go rushing into a treasured wildlife sanctuary for a short-term stopgap.

They were unable to get what they want through the normal legislative process. So, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle used a ploy—they attached their legislation to a defense bill, literally in the middle of the night.

As if that weren't bad enough, this bill has also been saddled with an irresponsible gift to drugmakers, shielding them from liability and giving victims only phantom protections. This is another proposal that did not go through the regular legislative process and could not have passed on its own merits.

Added on to all of that is a one percent across the board cut that will affect homeland security, education and health care programs. It will even chop \$4 billion from the defense budget that supports our troops. Again, this did not go through the regular process and could not have passed on its own merits.

Though I cannot vote for this bill on principle, I am glad that it includes the restoration of \$125 million for sick and injured 9/11 responders. The money was taken back from the responders at the president's request in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill we passed recently. My colleagues in the New York delegation and I worked hard to ensure that the 9/11 heroes can keep the assistance many of them so desperately still need. We were informed shortly before Thanksgiving that the Speaker would find a way to salvage the funds, and I thank him for following through with this action.

Despite the positive aspects of this bill, the other side of the aisle has attached—literally at the last minute—many unrelated items, which makes it impossible to support its passage. Such actions shouldn't be tolerated by this House. I wish to be associated with the comments of my friend and colleague, Mr. OBEY, who has spoken strongly in opposition to the process under which this final bill was created.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON S. 1932, DEFICIT REDUCTION ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sunday, December 18, 2005

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately for the American people, this reconciliation spending conference report arrives back in this Chamber substantially unimproved from its original form.

Notwithstanding modest revisions in areas like food stamps, low income heating assistance and physician reimbursement under Medicare, this package represents a warped vision for America: take from those with the least, give to those with the most and tell our children they will have to pay for it all later.

It would be a disgraceful document at any time of the year, but seems particularly Scrooge-like during this Holiday season.

Take Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which this conference report slashes by \$6.9 billion. The cost-sharing and premium increases mandated by this legislation fall entirely on the